PART I: PRE-REQUISTES & ADOPTION BY THE LOCAL JURISDICTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The three northernmost Utah counties that makes up the Bear River District is vulnerable to natural, technological, and man-made hazards that have the possibility of causing serious threat to the health, welfare, and security of our citizens. The cost of response to and recovery, both in terms of potential loss of life or property, from potential disasters can be lessened when attention is turned to mitigating their impacts and effects before they occur or re-occur.

This plan attempts to identify the region's hazards, understand our vulnerabilities and craft solutions that can significantly reduce threat to life and property. The plan is based on the premise that hazard mitigation works! With increased attention to managing natural hazards, communities can do much to reduce threats to existing citizens and avoid creating new problems in the future. In addition, many solutions can be implemented at minimal cost.

This is not an emergency response or management plan. Certainly, the plan can be used to identify weaknesses and refocus emergency response planning. Enhanced emergency response planning is an important mitigation strategy. However, the focus of this plan is to support better decision making directed toward avoidance of future risks and the implementation of activities or projects that will eliminate or reduce the risk for those that may already have exposure to a natural hazard threat.

HOW THE PLAN IS ORGANIZED

Part I of the plan provides a general overview of the process, the scope, purpose and overall goals of the plan. Part II documents the planning process and public involvement component of the plan. Part III gives some general background on the region's demographic, economic and physiographic characteristics.

Part IV the Risk Assessment section provides definitions for each natural hazard and documents how the hazards were chosen for analysis and discussion. Organized by "Annex" histories were compiled, and a risk assessment was performed for each of the identified natural hazards. Because of the uniformity of the hazard risk through out the region and the similarity of the vulnerabilities, agricultural related hazards (severe weather, drought, insect infestation) were analyzed at the regional or Bear River District level (Box Elder, Cache and Rich Counties) in the Bear River District Annex. All the other hazards were analyzed and discussed at the county/community level in each of the three "county annexes". This allowed the core of the location specific information for each county to be in one section.

Part V presents a capability assessment for the district. This section documents the staffing and personnel capabilities for each of the included jurisdictions. Finally, Part VI discusses the ongoing plan maintenance strategy and details efforts to get the recommendations of the plan incorporated in local land use planning and other decision making processes.

HOW THE PLAN SHOULD BE USED

First, the plan should be used to help local elected and appointed officials plan, design and implement programs and projects that will help reduce their community's vulnerability to natural hazards. Second, the plan should be used to facilitate inter-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration related to natural hazard mitigation planning and implementation. Third, the plan should be used to develop or provide guidance for local emergency response planning. Finally, if adopted, the plan will bring communities in compliance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

WHAT IS HAZARD MITIGATION?

Hazard mitigation is defined as any cost-effective action(s) that has the effect of reducing, limiting, or preventing vulnerability of people, property, and the environment to potentially damaging, harmful, or costly hazards. Hazard mitigation measures, which can be used to eliminate or minimize the risk to life and property, fall into three categories. First: are those that keep the hazard away from people, property, and structures. Second: are those that keep people, property, and structures away from the hazard. Third: are those that do not address the hazard at all but rather reduce the impact of the hazard on the victims such as insurance. This mitigation plan has strategies that fall into all three categories.

Hazard mitigation measures must be practical, cost effective, and environmentally and politically acceptable. Actions taken to limit the vulnerability of society to hazards must not in themselves be more costly than the value of anticipated damages.

The primary focus of hazard mitigation actions must be at the point at which capital investment decisions are made and based on vulnerability. Capital investments, whether for homes, roads public utilities, pipelines, power plants, or public works, determine to a large extent the nature and degree of hazard vulnerability of a community. Once a capital facility is in place, very few opportunities will present themselves over the useful life of the facility to correct any errors in location or construction with respect to hazard vulnerability. It is for these reasons that zoning and other ordinances, which manage development in high vulnerability areas, and building codes, which insure that new buildings are built to withstand the damaging forces of hazards, are often the most useful mitigation approaches a city can implement.

Previously, mitigation measures have been the most neglected programs within emergency management. Since the priority to implement mitigation activities is generally low in comparison to the perceived threat, some important mitigation measures take time to implement. Mitigation success can be achieved, however, if accurate information is portrayed through complete hazard identification and impact studies, followed by effective mitigation management. Hazard mitigation is the key to eliminating long-term risk to people and property in Utah from hazards and their effects. Preparedness for all hazards includes response and recovery plans, training, development, management of resources, and the need to mitigate each jurisdictional hazard.

The State Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DESHS) have identified the following hazards to be analyzed by each county. These hazards include avalanche, dam failure, debris flow, drought, earthquake, flood, flash flooding, infestation, landslide, problem soils, summer storm, tornado, urban and rural fires, and winter storm.

This regional/multi-jurisdictional plan evaluates the impacts, risks and vulnerabilities of natural hazards in a jurisdictional area affected by a disaster. The plan supports, provides assistance, identifies and describes mitigation projects for each annex. The suggested actions and plan implementation for local and tribal governments could reduce the impact of future disasters. Only through the coordinated partnership with emergency managers, political entities, public works officials, community planners and other dedicated individuals working to implement this program will it be accomplished.

To develop the mitigation plan, Utah DESHS, based on consultation with the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, the Utah League of Cities and Towns, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, chose to use the planning services of the Utah Association of Governments.

Seven regional Associations of Governments:

1. Bear River Associations of Governments
2. Wasatch Front Associations of Governments / Wasatch Front Regional Council
3. Mountainland Associations of Governments
4. Six County Associations of Governments
5. Southeast Utah Associations of Governments
6. Southwestern / Five County Associations of Governments
7. Uintah Basin Associations of Governments

PURPOSE

To fulfill federal, state, and local hazard mitigation planning responsibilities; to promote pre and post disaster mitigation measures, short/long range strategies that minimize suffering, loss of life, and damage to property resulting from hazardous or potentially hazardous conditions to which citizens and institutions within the state are exposed; and to eliminate or minimize conditions which would have an undesirable impact on our citizens, the economy, environment, and the well-being of the state of Utah. This plan is an aid in enhancing city and state officials, agencies, and public awareness to the threat that hazards have on property and life and what can be done to help prevent or reduce the vulnerability and risk of each Utah jurisdiction.

SCOPE

Utah PDM Planning phase is statewide. The State of Utah will work with all local jurisdictions by means of the seven regional Association of Governments. The *Bear River Association of Governments*, which encompasses all of Northern Utah, including the counties of Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties, will have a plan completed by December 31, 2003 to give to the Utah Division of Emergency Services. Future monitoring, evaluating, updating and implementing will

take place as new incidents occur and or every three to five years and will be included in the local mitigation plans as well.

OVERALL GOALS

To coordinate with each participating local government to develop a regional planning process meeting each plan component identified in the FEMA Region VIII Crosswalk document and any additional State planning expectation, both regionally and specifically, as needed, by gathering local input and to also meet the need of reducing risk from natural hazards in Utah, through the implementation of and updating of regional plans.

LOCAL GOALS

These goals form the basis for the development of the PDM Plan and are shown from highest priority, at the top of the list, to those of lesser importance nearer the bottom.

- Protection of life before, during, and after the occurrence of a disaster.
- Protection of emergency response capabilities (critical infrastructure)
- Communication and warning systems
- Emergency medical services and medical facilities
- Critical facilities
- Government continuity
- Protection of developed property, homes and businesses, industry, education opportunities and the cultural fabric of a community, by combining hazard loss reduction with the community's environmental, social, and economic needs.
- Protection of natural resources and the environment, when considering mitigation measures.

Long Term Goals

- Eliminate or reduce the long-term risk to human life and property from identified natural and technologic hazards.
- Aid both the private and public sectors in understanding the risks they may be exposed to and finding mitigation strategies to reduce those risks.
- Avoid risk of exposure to identified hazards.
- Minimize the impacts of those risks when they can not be avoided
- Mitigate the impacts of damage as a result or identified hazards.
- Accomplish mitigation strategies in such a way that negative environmental impacts are minimized.
- Provide a basis for funding of projects outlined as hazard mitigation strategies.
- Establish a regional platform to enable the community to take advantage of shared goals, resources, and the availability of outside resources.